

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 541

PS 013 989

AUTHOR Owens, Jane; Williams, Carolyn C.
TITLE The Effects of Viewing "Sesame Street" on Learning Styles and Readiness of Primary Children.
PUB DATE Nov 83
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Nashville, TN, November 16-18, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cognitive Style; *Elementary School Students; Primary Education; *School Readiness; *Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS *Sesame Street

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the relationship between learning styles and school readiness within two groups of 5- and 6-year-old primary school children. The first group was composed of 15 preschool children who watched an average of 5 hours of the television program "Sesame Street" per week; the second group consisted of 29 preschool children who did not watch the program. Twenty-five of the preschoolers were girls, and 29 were boys. Data were gathered through parents' reports of hours per week their child watched the program and through children's performance on the Learning Styles Inventory-Primary Version (LSI-P) and the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT). Two environmental elements of the LSI-P (light and design) and three readiness factors of the MRT (word meaning, matching, and alphabet) were significantly correlated with viewing "Sesame Street." Discriminant analysis revealed no significant overall differences between factors of readiness and elements of learning styles. (RH)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED238541

The Effects of Viewing "Sesame Street" on
Learning Styles and Readiness of
Primary Children

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

by

Jane Owens
Monroe County School System

and

Carolyn C. Williams
Mississippi State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Carolyn C.
Williams

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Presented at Mid-South Educational Research Association
Nashville, Tennessee
November 16-18, 1983

PS 013989

THE EFFECTS OF VIEWING "SESAME STREET" ON
LEARNING STYLES AND READINESS OF
PRIMARY CHILDREN

Introduction

Within the last two decades, researchers have spent considerable time studying the effects of Sesame Street on the readiness scores of primary children. (Minton, 1975; Bogatz, 1972; Coates, Pusser and Goodman, 1976; Rogers, 1972). An analyses of the results of these studies have shown that in many instances viewing Sesame Street affects the readiness scores of preschool children, particularly on the alphabet and numbers subtests of the Metropolitan Readiness Test (Minton, 1975). It has also been shown that even though the viewing of Sesame Street has beneficial effects on readiness scores of preschool children, it is not clearly understood whether these effects are translated to **improved** academic performance.

One major factor which may or may not have affected the outcomes of previous studies on Sesame Street and readiness among preschoolers was lack of effective techniques for identifying the learning styles of the subjects studied. The concept of identifying the learning styles of young children is relatively innovative, but has in recent years gained momentum. (Carbo, 1980; Dunn and Dunn, 1980, Keefe, 1979), Learning styles as reported by researchers is the way in which the elements of the physical stimuli (perception, intake, mobility) sociological stimuli (peers, self, pair, team adult, persistence, structure) and environmental stimuli (sound, light, temperature, room design) affect the way in which an individual is able to comprehend and retain information.

Because the investigation of learning styles has been a promising avenue of investigation for explaining learning differences of preschool children, this research was conducted to determine the relationship between learning styles and the variables of readiness for preschool children who watched Sesame Street.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of learning styles and readiness of two groups of primary children:

- (1) Children who watched an average of five hours a week of Sesame Street and
- (2) Children who did not watch Sesame Street.

Methodology

Subjects

Subjects were selected from primary children in a public school system in a rural area of Northeast Mississippi. All of the children were six years old on or before September 1, 1982.

The sample for the study consisted of a total of 44 primary children. Group membership was determined by the number of hours of Sesame Street each preschooler viewed per week. Group 1 was comprised of 15 preschoolers who watched five hours or more of Sesame Street per week. Group 2 were comprised of 29 preschoolers who did not watch Sesame Street.

Twenty-five of the preschoolers were girls and 29 were boys. Parental permission was secured for each preschooler to participate in the study. Parents were asked to monitor and indicate the number of hours per week their preschooler watched Sesame Street.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in assessing learning styles was the Learning Styles Inventory - Primary Version (LSI-P) designed by Perrin in 1977. It was a pictorial adaption of the self-report Learning Style Inventory (LSI-P) developed by Dunn, Dunn, and Price (Perrin, 1979). The LSI-P consisted of 12 8X12 inch cards for each of the 12 learning style elements (sound, light, temperature, design, structure, responsibility intake, mobility, time of day, motivation, perception, and sociological). Each card depicted two to four pictures of potential preference within each element. On the back of each card there was a brief introduction to the element which was read to the subjects. The introduction was followed by six to 13 questions related to the element. All questions required a yes or no response, except the last question in each set. The final question required the students to point to a picture which best described the preferred response for the element being examined. Scores for each element were calculated by counting the number of responses related to the element and placing this number over the total number of questions in the element subtest. Response fractions which showed a 90% response rate were classified as factors; an 80% response rate indicated a preference. Response fractions below 80% showed the respondent was not significantly influenced by the element. The instrument consisted of a total of 90 questions. It was individually administered and took approximately 15 minutes per student.

The Metropolitan Readiness Test was used to measure readiness skills. A readiness score on the Metropolitan Readiness Test consists of a total of scores from six separate subtests:

1. Word Meaning-a 16 item picture vocabulary test.
2. Listening-a 16 item test of ability to comprehend phrases and sentences-instead of individual words.
3. Matching-a 14 item test of visual perception involving the recognition of similarities.
4. Alphabet-a 16 item test of ability to recognize lower-case letters-of the alphabet.
5. Numbers-a 26 item test of number knowledge.
6. Copying-a 14 item test which measures a combination of visual perception and motor control.

Data Collection

The LSI-P, and MRT were administered to the primary students in August of 1982. Parents were asked to monitor and respond to a form which asked them to indicate the number of hours their preschooler watched Sesame Street per week. The primary students were then divided into two groups. All tests were administered and scored by the principal investigator.

Data Analysis

The subtests and total scores on the LSI-P and the MRT were statistically analyzed using univariate and canonical discriminant analysis. The Chi square was used to determine statistical significance and for collaborative analysis. The .05 level was used as the criterion for significance.

Results

As shown in table 1, two environmental elements of the LSI-P and three readiness factors of the MRT were significantly correlated with viewing Sesame Street for primary children. The readiness factors of (1) word meaning, (2) matching, and (3) alphabet are shown with r's of .27, .21 and .21, respectively. The environmental elements of light

and design are shown with r's of .19 and .21, respectively. Finally, the total score on the LSI-P and MRT is shown with an r of .19.

Table 1

Correlation of Learning Styles and Readiness Scores with Viewing Sesame Street

<u>Variables</u>	<u>r</u>
Word Meaning	.27 **
Light	.19 *
Matching	.21 *
Design	.21 *
Alphabet	.21 *
Total Score	.19 *

** Significant at .01 level

* Significant at .05 level

In tables 2, 3, and 4 the discriminant analysis revealed that no significant overall differences were shown between the factors of readiness and the elements of learning styles. The one major factor which may account for the lack of significant results was the limited number of Sesame Street viewers in the sample. Only 15 primary children watched five hours or more Sesame Street per week.

Table 2

Overall Differences in Learning Styles Exhibited By Two Groups

Function Variables	Loadings	Canonical R	Wilk's Lambda	df	Chi Square
Sound	.24				
Temperature	- .19				
Sociological	- .62				
Food	.41				
Responsibility	.20				
Motivation	.00				
Perception	.48				
Light	.47				
Design	.35				
Structure	.28				
Time	.09				
Mobility	.09				
		.42	.82	12	8.07 (NS)

Table 3

Overall Differences in Learning Styles Exhibited By Two Groups

Functions Variables	Loadings	Canonical R	Wilk's Lambda	df	Chi Square
Word Meaning	.82				
Listening	.15				
Matching	.78				
Numbers	-1.21				
Copying	-.66				
		.37	.86	6	6.53 (NS)

Table 4

Overall Differences in Readiness and Learning Styles Discriminating
Between the Two Groups

Function Variables	Loadings	Canonical R	Wilk's Lambda	df	Chi Square
Word Meaning	- 1.07				
Listening	- .04				
Matching	- .76				
Alphabet	- .15				
Numbers	.89				
Copying	.40				
Sound	.07				
Temperature	- .19				
Sociological	- .70				
Food	.40				
Responsibility	.11				
Motivation	.29				
Perception	.42				
Light	.18				
Design	.01				
Structure	.13				
Time	.10				
mobility	- .25				
		.58	.65	21	.80(NS)

As shown in Table 5, an overall percent of 81.63 of the primary children who viewed Sesame Street were properly classified on the basis of discriminant function composed of learning styles and readiness scores.

In summary, this study found that primary children who viewed Sesame Street For sustained periods of time had significant environment preferences during the learning process. In spite of the small sample size, this study also found that the readiness subtest scores on word meaning, matching and alphabet for primary children significantly correlated with viewing Sesame Street.

Table 5

Classification of Two Groups on Basis of Discriminant Function Composed of Learning Styles and Readiness Differences

Actual Group	N	Predicted Group Membership			
		Viewers		Non-Viewers	
		N		N	
1. <u>Sesame Street</u> Viewers	12	10	83.3%	2	16.7%
2. Non-Viewers	37	7	18.9%	30	81.1%

Overall percent of cases properly classified: 81.63%

REFERENCES

- Bogatz, G. A., and Ball, S., "The impact of sesame street on children's first school experience," July 1972, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 124-103.
- Carbo, M. A. An analysis of the relationships between the modality preferences of kindergarteners and selected reading treatments as they affect the learning of a basic sight word vocabulary. (Doctoral dissertation, St. John's University, 1980). Dissertation Abstract International 1980, 41, 1389A-1390A. (University Microfilms No. 8021790)
- Coates, B., and Pusser, H. E., and Goodman, I., "The Influence of 'Sesame Street' and 'Mister Rogers Neighborhood' on Children's Social Behavior in the Preschool." Child Development, March 1976, 138-144.
- Dunn and Dunn, Teaching Students Through Their Individual Learning Styles: A Practical Approach. Reston, VA., Reston Publishing, 1978.
- Dunn, R. & Dunn, K. What is your child's learning style? The Newsletter of Parenting, 1980, 3 (1), 5-6,8.
- Minton, J. H., "The impact of sesame street on readiness," Sociology of Education, Spring 1975, 141-151.
- Perrin, Janet, Learning Style Inventory--Primary Version. St. John's University, N. Y. 1979.
- Rogers, J. M., "A Summary of the Literature on Sesame Street," The Journal of Special Education, Spring 1972, 43-50.